Sabah Museum Monograph, Vol. 4 (1993)

TOMBONUWO PHONEMICS

John Wayne King

1. INTRODUCTION

Tombonuwo is a Paitanic language spoken by approximately 20,000 people along the Sugut, Paitan and Tengkarasan rivers in the Labuk-Sugut district and in the Pitas district.[1] The dialect under study in this paper is the dialect of the Sugut river proper though some distinctions noted in other dialects may be mentioned for the purpose of contrast.

Particularly then, this paper describes that dialect of Tombonuwo spoken in the villages of Sungai-Sungai and Lingkabau.[2]

[1]There are also Tombonuwo speakers living on Jambongan Island and large communities of speakers in Beluran and Sandakan.

[2]For the purposes of this paper, the language under discussion will be referred to as **Tombonuwo**, even though this would be the autonym of only the non-Muslim speakers of this language. The purpose of choosing the name Tombonuwo here, rather than the name Sungai is to keep this language separate from other "Sungai" groups (cf. Smith 1984:40).

In many areas the ethnonym **Sungai** is the preferred name for this language and the people speaking it, because of the "pagan" connotations of the term **Tombonuwo** (King 1984).

This paper is based primarily on data collected during 1983 at the village of Sungai-Sungai, Sugut, Labuk-Sugut District, from the following language helpers:

Ali b. Jambul, age approximately 65 years;
Selamat b. Mansor, age approximately 55 years;
Madi b. Toroku', age approximately 45 years;
Rusnah bt. Anging, age 19 years;
Jalma bt. Anging, age 17 years.

PHONOLOGICAL DESCRIPTIONS of SABAH LANGUAGES

Studies from ten languages:
Bonggi
Ida'an
Kadazan/Dusun
Kalabuan
Kimaragang
Labuk-Kinabatangan Kadazan
Lotud
Tagal
Tatana'
Tombonuwo

Edited by
Michael E. Boutin and Inka Pekkanen

SABAH MUSEUM
KOTA KINABALU
1993